



May 16, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Shelby:

AARP, on behalf of our nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, urges the Appropriations Committee to fully fund the Social Security Administration (SSA) in fiscal year 2023. For years, the agency has been plagued with serious customer service deficiencies as a result of chronic underfunding. Congress must address this by providing the full amount requested by the Acting Commissioner for FY 2023 to ensure the SSA has the resources necessary to fulfill its vital mission in a timely and effective manner.

The agency's funding challenges have very real consequences for older Americans and people with disabilities. SSA's average disability claim processing time in April grew to an all-time high of 187 days – the yearly average ten years ago was only 70 days. Callers to the agency wait an average of 27 minutes, or nearly ten times longer than about ten years ago. And the average disability claimant will wait nearly 2 years for a final hearing decision while their health worsens. Outrageously, more than 10,000 people die every year while waiting for a decision. SSA's inability to remedy its customer service problems has been directly impacted by chronic underfunding. Between 2010 and 2021, SSA's operating budget shrank by 13% even as the number of beneficiaries grew by 22% to more than 70 million Americans.

We urge you to do all you can to ensure that the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies has an allocation to provide funding of the SSA at no less than the level recommended by the Acting Commissioner for FY 2023, \$15.156 billion.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this issue. Social Security is a lifeline for millions of Americans who count on the agency to be there for them when they need it most. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Timothy Gearan of our Government Affairs staff at 202-434-3803.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy A. LeaMond", is written over a faint, circular official seal.

Nancy A. LeaMond  
Executive Vice President and  
Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer

cc: The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies  
The Honorable Roy Blunt, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health Human Services, Education and Related Agencies